


Drinking water utility's lawsuit takes new stab at nutrient problems | tile drains AKA "farm field sewers"-- --

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Subject	Drinking water utility's lawsuit takes new stab at nutrient problems tile drains AKA "farm field sewers"-- -- www.eenews.net
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"They [Ag industry and political supporters] want to go down this path of voluntarily trying to find ways to reduce those pollutants and test them out and see how it works," Mayor Franklin Cownie said. "Well, we're seeing that it's not working."

<http://www.eenews.net/stories/1060012531>

"Lori Sprague, a hydrologist with the U.S. Geological Survey who studies water quality trends, said tile drainage systems essentially short-circuit the natural filtration system that would normally allow some nitrogen to be taken up by plants or turned into harmless gas.

It's hard to know how much of that nitrogen could still make its way into a stream through the normal path of groundwater, though. Further complicating the calculation is the fact that the Midwest regions thought to have the densest tile drainage are also those with heavy concentrations of row crop farming, making it difficult to know what role the tile drains play. 'But we have observed when there are more tile drains, if you hold everything else constant, there tends to be higher nitrate levels in streams,' Sprague said."

All the best,

James Ehlers

Executive Director

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